

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

PLANT MATERIALS CENTER
LOS LUNAS, NM

Planting Guide for Production of 'Bonita' Soaptree yucca (~~Yucca elata~~)

SEED PRODUCTION

1. Some plants of Soaptree yucca should begin producing flowers in their fifth year after being transplanted as seedlings. All should be flowering the following year. Soaptree yucca requires a specific moth for pollination. The exact distribution of this moth has not been determined. Generally it would be in the vicinity of where yucca is found naturally. Plants have not produced seed after five years of flowering at Los Lunas, N. M., but it has been reported to produce seed in Albuquerque, N. M. If seed is produced, it should be harvested as the capsules begin to open, which generally is in¹ the fall.
2. The seed are best cleaned by hand, cracking open the capsules and extracting the achenes.

PRODUCTION OF SEEDLINGS

1. For best growth plants should be grown in a well-drained sandy loam. The seedbed can be prepared by plowing, disking and firming the surface with a roller or cultipacker.

Fumigation of seedbeds prior to planting is helpful to reduce weed competition and insect or disease problems. CAUTION: Be sure to handle and apply fumigants or any other chemicals according to labeled instructions.

2. Soaptree yucca seed requires no pregermination treatment. It can be planted after danger of frost has passed. Emergence should begin after about two weeks.
3. At the Los Lunas Plant Materials Center (PMC) the seed are sown in rows in beds. There are four rows, spaced 20 cm apart, in each bed. The beds are spaced for ease of access and cultivation. Seeding rates will vary according to ultimate use. At the Los Lunas PMC, approximately 300 seed or 10 grams of clean seed per meter, should yield 200 useable plants. Seeding rates this heavy will yield a high percentage of uniform liner stock 20-30 cm tall) after two years. Lower seeding rates would yield larger, less uniform, plants. The seed should be planted 1-2.5 cm deep.
4. The beds should be mulched to prevent excessive drying. An excelsior mulch with net backing is used at the Los Lunas PMC. This enables the mulch to be tacked down to prevent it from blowing. The beds should be sprinkled only enough to keep the seed zone moist to lessen the possibility of damping off.
5. Seedlings of Soaptree yucca are not fertilized at the Los Lunas PMC. If fertility is a problem, fertilization should be guided by soil tests.
6. The plants should be dug when dormant, after one or two growing seasons.

Prepared by J. F. - 3/79